

Office of Economic Development

Business Retention and Expansion and Recruiting Services

Request for Qualifications

Seattle is an extraordinary city in which to do business, and the Seattle Office of Economic Development (OED) is focused on creating a robust economy with broadly shared prosperity. OED helps to create a vibrant economy which benefits the whole city by promoting access to economic opportunities for all of Seattle's diverse communities. OED provides services directly to businesses through advocacy, retention and expansion assistance, and workforce development. In addition, the office provides business development assistance for companies who are looking for strategies to enhance the daily operations of their business. OED also focuses on growing the local economy by recruiting companies from around the world who are looking to relocate or expand their operations in Seattle.

The City of Seattle's Office of Economic Development (OED) works to maintain and build on our economic strengths to ensure we remain competitive nationally and globally. OED has developed a strategy to support high growth companies that leverage our city's economic advantages, reflect Seattle's unique character and identity, and build on the foundations of our economy. Key to this strategy is a focus on nurturing the growth of local companies, with recruitment as a supporting activity, as tools for economic growth and job creation.

Growth companies span industry sectors. They have the intention to scale and expand as common characteristics. In emerging industries, such as information technology and life sciences, these companies seek to create a replicable and scalable business model, which most often includes efforts to obtain external investment such as venture capital.

In mature industries, such as manufacturing and retail, growth companies have advanced beyond the startup phase with the intent to grow even larger. Typically, these businesses are characterized by 10 – 100 employees and \$1M - \$50M in revenues, but this can depend on the industry. Supporting these growth entrepreneurs translates into positive payoffs when it comes to economic growth and prosperity such as job creation and increased investment. Seattle is focused on continuing to nurture a diverse economy with a healthy mix of companies of all sizes.

Research has documented that new and young businesses—as opposed to small businesses generally—play an outsized role in net job creation in the United States. But not all new businesses are the same—the substantial majority of nascent entrepreneurs do not intend to grow their businesses significantly or innovate, and many more never do. Differentiating growth-oriented “startups” from the rest of young businesses is an important distinction in economic development activities focused on job creation.¹

OED's Business Retention and Expansion Program (BREP) is adapting its approach to focus its investments on growth companies. The program targets outreach to 500 growth businesses

¹ <http://www.kauffman.org/newsroom/2013/08/young-hightech-firms-outpace-private-sector-job-creation>, Tech Starts: High-Technology Business Formation and Job Creation in the United States, August 2013, Ian Hathaway, Kauffman Foundation Research Series, p. 2

annually, and providing a minimum of 250 businesses with follow-up services, including connecting them with opportunities to expand their markets, advice and referrals on financial and management challenges, navigating the regulatory environment, and assistance with site location. Through a competitive process, OED selects partners based on their ability to reach out to growth companies and connect them with resources. This work could be approached through an industry sector lens, to assist in outreach and provide support to businesses which may share common sector specific issues and leverage relationships. For example, a proposal may be focused on serving growth companies in Manufacturing, Maritime, Interactive Media or Life Sciences. OED works with the partners to focus on outcomes that support our broader mission and goals, track our progress using consistent metrics, and communicate company information using a common database system, Executive Pulse.

OED seeks partners with expertise and capacity to identify, engage, and support the retention and expansion of growth companies either through direct service or referral to a subject matter expert. OED is looking for respondents who have competencies in the identification and engagement of Seattle based growth companies and/or the delivery of specialized business expertise to help these companies break through strategic and/or operational challenges to support their growth. Respondents may seek funding for either or both of the program areas described in the following section. The responses should state clearly the program area(s) to which they are responding.

Program Areas

- 1. Identification, Engagement, and Referral:** Respondents interested in this program component should share their qualifications for assisting growth companies and their strategy for conducting business visits and providing direct assistance to businesses. Respondents must be able to demonstrate particular expertise in reaching, engaging, and assisting woman and minority business enterprises (WMBEs). Generally growth companies in mature industries will have \$1MM – 50MM in revenues, 10-100 employees and potential for growth. However, respondents are asked to share their approach for defining and identifying growth companies. If respondents plan to target companies within a certain industry sector, please describe why this sector is significant to Seattle's economy and provide information about growth companies in that cluster and the specific challenges they face. In addition, provide a narrative of what resources and assistance they will provide, indicate the number of businesses they project to serve, and a dollar amount for doing the work.

Desired qualifications of respondent:

- Ability to identify and visit Seattle growth companies
- Capacity to connect businesses with other companies, organizations, and resources in the region essential to growing their businesses
- Experience in counseling existing companies on business growth opportunities, how to leverage competitive advantages and disseminate relevant information to support business success
- Skills in problem solving and resolution of issues impacting businesses in partnership with OED staff and other partners

- Effective business outreach capability, particularly with WMBEs
- Ability to help firms access capital
- Real estate and site selection expertise
- Experience using CRM database systems

2. Business Development: Respondents interested in this program component should share their qualifications and sector experience for assisting growth companies with strategies for growth. Respondents are to propose the services they will provide, the strategy of how the services will be delivered, the capacity to deliver the services and the dollar amount for doing the work. Respondents must be able to demonstrate particular expertise in providing technical assistance to woman and minority business enterprises (WMBEs)

Desired qualifications of respondent:

- Strategic planning
- Sales and Marketing Strategies
- Financial Management
- Business Plan Development
- Operational Management
- Experience using CRM database systems

REPORTING

Outcome measurement is a critical part of this work. Successful respondents will be required to use the OED business contact management system. Respondents will work with OED to generate quarterly and annual reports that shall include data for Seattle specific business assistance activity such as:

- Number and size of growth businesses visited
- Number of growth business connected with resources and issues solved
- Number of WMBEs connected with resources and issues solved
- Examples of assistance that led to the growth and expansion of a business.

Budget

Total budget for this work is approximately \$500,000 over a two-year period and will be allocated among successful respondents:

- \$250,000 in 2015
- \$250,000 in for 2016 (subject to future City budget authorization)

PREPARING A LETTER OF QUALIFICATIONS

Respondents can focus their submissions on both components of the RFQ. We strongly encourage leveraging existing business support programs and industry expertise to create innovative and new partnerships between organizations and firms with complementary skills to deliver these services.

If your organization/firm is interested in competing for this work, please prepare a letter of no more than 10 pages outlining qualifications. Additional attachments can be provided to include: resumes of key personnel, joint venture or partnering firm profiles, letters of recommendation etc.

Submissions should specifically address the following:

1. Identify the program area(s) of interest
2. Address desired qualifications outlined above for the program area(s) of interest
3. Describe business outreach and problem solving strategies
4. Describe your approach for defining and identifying growth companies
5. If you are targeting companies within a certain industry sector, please describe why this sector is significant to Seattle's economy and provide information about growth companies in that cluster and the specific challenges they face.
6. Describe what resources and assistance you will provide, estimate the number of businesses and particularly growth businesses you could serve, and a dollar amount for doing the work.
7. Discuss your organization/firm's experience and relationships in the program area (s) of interest
8. Describe your organization/firm's particular expertise in working with diverse businesses (i.e. WMBEs)
9. Provide qualifications and background for key staff
10. If you plan to partner with other organizations/firms in delivering this service, please describe how this partnership will work and the role and background of all partners.

SUBMISSIONS

Your response must arrive no later than **5:00 p.m. (PST)** on **12/19/2014** to:

Lance Randall
City of Seattle
Office of Economic Development
700 Fifth Avenue, Suite 5752, Seattle, WA 98104 (deliveries)
P.O. Box 94708
Seattle, WA 98124-4708 (postal mail)

The City of Seattle retains the right to reject any responses and is not required to award any funds if in its opinion the response failed to meet its requirements. Electronic submissions are requested.

SCHEDULE

Informational meeting for potential respondents: **12/09/2014**

Proposals due to the Office of Economic Development: **12/19/2014 (5:00 PM PST)**

Finalist interviews: **Week of January 5th, 2015**

Notification of selection: **Week of January 26th, 2015**

Contract executed by: **3/31/2015**

A selection committee will review the responses to this Request, followed by conversations with finalists, and selection of one or more organizations.

CONTRACTS

OED will develop contracts with the successful organization(s). The contracts will include a scope of work and project milestones and outcomes. Reimbursement will be based on achievement of project milestones and outcomes. OED retains the right to revise budget requests to reflect funding availability.

PROTEST PROCEDURES

In the event that an unsuccessful RFQ respondent wishes to protest the selection of a successful respondent, they must do so by submitting in writing the reason for the protest to the Director of OED. Any such protest must be received within three (3) business days of receipt of notification of the successful respondent.

The decision of the Director will be final and conclusive unless the respondent affected makes a written request for reconsideration by the Director. Such a request must be received within three (3) business days after receipt of the Director's decision. A request for reconsideration will be denied unless the respondent affected shows the request is based on information that was not available prior to the protest. The Director shall consider all the facts available and issue a decision within five (5) business days after receipt of the request for rehearing, unless additional time is necessary, in which case, the affected respondent will be notified of the delay.

WOMEN AND MINORITY-OWNED BUSINESS USE REQUIREMENTS

There will be no Women and Minority-Owned Business (WMBE) set-aside requirements on the resulting contract. However, in accordance with the Seattle Municipal Code 20.46A, the selected contractor will be required to make affirmative efforts to utilize WMBEs in performing the contract, whether as subcontractors, suppliers, or in any other capacity. The selected contractor must also comply with affirmative action and equal employment opportunity provisions mandated by SMC 20.44.

FAIR CONTRACTING PRACTICES ORDINANCE

The selected contractors will be required to comply with the Fair Contracting Practices Ordinance of the City of Seattle (Ordinance 119601), as amended. Conduct made unlawful by that ordinance constitutes a breach of contract. Engaging in an unfair contracting practice may

also result in the imposition of a civil fine or forfeiture under the Seattle Criminal Code as well as various civil remedies.

If you have any questions about this RFQ please contact Lance Randall, City of Seattle's Office of Economic Development, (206) 733-9743 or lance.randall@seattle.gov.